/856 cont./

X 881 is regarded as the most important law and as a rule of life that is taken for granted. The candidates are given ample opportunity to practice this.

X 881 866 1. Physical Bearing. In the external forms of constraint the Yamana make no distinction between boys and girls; both are affected in the same way. It is well known that each uš̆wā̆ala has his place beside his sponsor. In other words, the principal sponsor has the secondary sponsor on one side of him and his protégé on the other (cf. Fig. 83). One of the two sponsors, who alternate, constantly watches over the hē̆takuxē̆olan.

X 881 516 866 Immediately after his reception in the Great Hut each candidate must assume the customary position (p. 703), squatting on his crossed legs which are bent at the knees at right angles. The upper part of the body leans slightly forward, the head is still more bent, and the eyes look at the ground directly in front of the knees. The arms are crossed over the chest (278). In this

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278. The posture required by the Selk'nam of their candidates in the Great Hut (Vol. I, 1016) is different from the one described here, but they, as well as the Yamana, demand this external constraint with exaggerated strictness.

position everyone shows strained effort. Even if all the other marks of distinction were lacking, a new visitor could immediately differentiate the uš̆wā̆ala from the rest of the participants by this compulsory position.

This position, which is uncomfortable enough in itself, is made extraordinarily difficult because one must sit still. The candidate must do so for three hours or more, before he is permitted to move for some specific reason. He may not lean against anything, slump, bend sideways, slide around, unfold his arms, stretch, or lift his eyes and look around inquisitively; he may neither rub nor scratch any part of his body.

X 881 966 The adults intentionally provide each uš̆wā̆ala with repeated opportunities to test himself. For instance, they secretly put a small weevil on his naked back, and while the insect is crawling around they observe him closely. Woe to him if he so much as

X 881 /856 cont./
• 866 twitches a muscle! Sometimes smoke whirls up from the long fire in the Great Hut. The others stretch out flat or turn their heads away; the candidate must remain motionless, even if thick smoke from the green wood envelopes him and irritates his eyes. Since his eyes usually begin to water, the helpless chap simply cannot avoid blinking, but even for that /857/ the older people call him to account with gruff reproaches, demanding that he control even reflex motions. When wood is placed on the fire, a man will purposely but inconspicuously poke about in the embers directly in front of the candidate to make the sparks fly. The candidate may neither turn aside nor brush off those that fall on him. I once saw rain come in through a rather large leak and drip directly on the right shoulder of an uswáala. They purposely let this go on for a whole day, whereas any adult in such a situation would have immediately sought relief.

Along with this motionless, compulsory posture, the Yamana also demand that the candidate to a certain extent assume a serious expression. He must maintain it and not brighten up, even if something nearby should give him reason to do so. A candidate would have to pay dearly for smiling or laughing. Even during the games and dances to which they, too, are invited, the candidates may not give up their serious composure, but are to act as though they were completely withdrawn. The adults provide special tests. Sometimes they tell amusing experiences and droll stories; some of them burst out laughing and others shake with laughter. Woe to the uswáala who so much as moves his lips or smiles!

The strict educators in Tierra del Fuego are not content with this, however. They insist on an extreme curtailment of freedom for their candidates. The latter may not, except for a justifiable purpose, give up their squatting position, in other words, they may not stand up or leave the Great Hut to relieve themselves outside. Formerly they were permitted to attend quickly to natural functions only twice a day. Even these unpredictable demands of nature must be adapted to the strict rules during the čiéxaus celebration!

X 881 Nevertheless, the much underrated Fuegians are good observers and understand human nature thoroughly. When the

/857 cont./

X 881 compulsory position became almost unbearable and I did not know what else to do, I told my sponsor that I had to relieve myself. He nodded permission. An hour later I repeated my request. Outside I stretched my twisted limbs to my heart's desire each time, but quickly returned to the Great Hut. When, however, after a considerable time I repeated the same request, I was point-blank denied permission with a light shake of the head, and Chris merely said: "You don't have to relieve yourself that often!" The candidate who has been busy at something in the Great Hut or outside must return to his seat without delay and resume the squatting position exactly as before.

X 881 785 866 2. Meager Nourishment. For every candidate his stay in the Great Hut is an uninterrupted hunger trial. During the first four or six days he is given only a single mussel in the late afternoon and, at the same time, a good swallow of water. He is served both these things by his /858/ sponsor. The uš̌wą̈ala sucks the water out of the mussel shell with a small tube-shaped bird bone which the sponsor holds in one hand while he places his other hand on the throat of his protégé and presses slightly, as though to prevent the latter from drinking too much. The sponsor himself makes the small bone tube, ę́mbalim, hands it to his protégé each time he sucks water, and leaves him this article as a souvenir at the end of the čię́xaus celebration. After the first few days the uš̌wą́ala gets a larger amount of food, even twice a day, at the same time that food is brought to the adults from the cookhut. It is the sponsor's duty to determine the amount that he wants the uš̌wą́ala to have each time. He takes into consideration the candidate's physical condition, but arranges everything so that he really suffers hunger. Later, drinking water is permitted several times a day, and the candidate asks his sponsor for it each time.

The young people are very much tormented by hunger, but in spite of it, they are made to eat very slowly. When small bits are distributed, perhaps berries and fungi gathered by the girls or roasted pieces of meat from a bird killed by the boys, the uš̌wą́ala may eat only after all the adults have been served. It is the duty of the sponsor to watch over these details. With all the strictness, however, he will not let matters go so far as to have his protégé collapse from exhaustion and become incapable

X 881 785 866

/858 cont./
of going on with the rest of the čiéxaus celebration.

In front of the candidates, adults do not express themselves explicitly about the purpose of this harsh hunger trial. Occasionally the leader or the sponsor will make a remark, as though parenthetically: "Everyone must have learned to get along with little food! For it happens sometimes that a whole family will get into a situation of great distress." Previously I had learned another version from Alfredo: "When the ušwáala are worn down with hunger, they are more receptive to the teachings, and the admonitions will go deeper!" There is always someone who accompanies the candidates when they go outside the Great Hut, so that they will not, on their own, make up for their many deprivations and perhaps eat a great deal.

X 881 866

3. Little Sleep. Although we are justified in speaking of a program for the čiéxaus celebration, this does not mean a definite division into hours. The length of time for this or that exercise is much too dependent on the prevailing mood at the moment, and no obligatory hour strikes for those fortunate Fuegians, either in their daily life or in this secret celebration.

If there is no fixed time for the adult participants to go to bed, even less is there such for the ušwáala. There is, of course, considerable restriction, but it is the task of the sponsor to carry this out in detail. He watches the physical condition of his protégé, just as in the matter of food, and lets /859/ this guide his decision. Even so, the night's sleep at the beginning of the čiéxaus lasts only five hours at most, which is obviously too little for young people. Of course the conscious intent is to weaken them.

In the evening, as soon as all the games and dances have ceased, the adults get ready to go to sleep. Not until two or three hours later will each sponsor independently grant his protégé permission to lie down also. By that time it is usually midnight. Between five and six o'clock in the morning the sponsor shakes the weary sleeper vigorously and merely says: "Sit up!" He has no choice but to obey. Half asleep he now squats in his place until it is light and the general cleaning in the Great Hut begins (279).

X 881 866 515

279. In more recent times the Yamana in the Great Hut also adhere to their practice of washing

/859 cont./

themselves in the morning. Most of them use soap, which they also permit the candidates to use. Almost every day all the occupants of the hut arrange it so that after the dawn they all wash themselves at the same time. This is usually done in conjunction with making everyone's sleeping place orderly throughout.

I also learned from old Pedro that formerly very often in the middle of the night, sometimes as an interruption of the already very short sleep, the male uwíala were led to the beach, where they were obliged to take a bath, move about in the water for some time, and, following the example of the men accompanying them, carry on the monotonous singing of the cíyaxa hut in an audible voice. This repeated diving into the water served to harden them physically. The singing, however, was supposed to prove to Yetáita and all the malevolent spirits who approach the Great Hut that the candidates were constantly vigilant. During my first initiation we three uwíala were driven down to the water twice in the dead of night. The other two had to take off their clothes and dive into the cold water several times. I was spared this torture, but at any rate I was supposed to become acquainted with it.

Not content merely to curtail the time for sleeping, they also prescribe the position of the body during sleep. The position assumed by the uwíala for sitting is retained as he lies down on his side, that is to say, arms interlocked and legs drawn up. There is nothing placed under the head to raise it. Everyone falls asleep immediately from utter exhaustion. Inadvertently the weary one stretches himself, unfolds his interlocked arms, and extends his legs. He cannot avoid touching his neighbor in doing so, for the space is very crowded. In any case, one of the sponsors beside him is always awake and gives the uwíala a push so that he wakes up. Immediately he must pull in his limbs again.

In this less than friendly manner the candidate's already scantily apportioned sleep is sometimes painfully interrupted time and again, but it is done intentionally. During my first initiation this torture almost /860/ brought me to the point of despair. One

1: Gwinde--712 E-8 (1918-1954) 1937 998 Tahgan SH6

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X811 966

morning when old Alibedo noticed my troubled state, he merely said indifferently but decisively: "One must have learned to get along with little room even for sleeping at night!" Later I again heard this explanation: "Sometimes bad weather overtakes several families, all of whom must find room in a single small hut. In the canoe, also, in dangerous seas, all the occupants must squat motionlessly crowded together for a long period. Our young people learn such [skills] here in the Tahgan!" If one of them should fall asleep from fatigue during the day, he is immediately shaken so hard that he soon gets over his sleepiness. With regard to these restrictions imposed on his protégé every sponsor is almost unfeeling.

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The uninterrupted singing throughout the whole night is intended not only to ward off evil spirits, but is also supposed to make the people in the dwellings believe that no one in the Great Hut is sleeping and that all of them are always awake.

X811 362

4. Body Decoration. The Yemana quite generally like to decorate their bodies on certain occasions. Chief among these decorations is body painting, which is quickly and easily done. The ubangis constantly wear certain facial designs which make them recognizable as such. At least twice a day these are touched up for them, because they unavoidably become blurred. The sponsor himself regularly paints these designs on his protégé. As is customary generally, he mixes the red or black powdered pigment with blubber, water, or saliva in a mussel shell or in the palm of his left hand and applies the mixture in lines or dots on the face with a short little painting stick. Often he first smears the entire face with white paint, since on this background the drawings stand out better.

It is not customary to paint the candidate's entire body. He is characterized by one, two, or three thin lines extending from the nostrils or corners of the mouth to the ear lobes on either side. These are red and only very exceptionally black. Furthermore, a favored design for the ubangis consists of fine red lines extending from the lower eyelid over the cheek, perhaps three in number or even up to 15.

These two basic patterns are the ones most often used for the candidates, but there is nothing to stop the adults from copying

/863 cont./
them that a person has dutifully sat through his term as ü̆wɨ̆ŋa in the youth initiation.

They have not entirely forgotten this earlier custom, but have provided a neat substitute in the form of special body painting, which, however, only adult participants use. They paint the entire upper part of the body red and over this draw a white band the width of three fingers, which starts on either side of the spinal column and extends over the uppermost part of the arm and horizontally across the chest. I was definitely assured that this body painting is applied instead of the former tattooing. One day or another a man will still paint himself in this fashion.

The external measures to which each candidate of the ɛ̆ɨ̆xaŋ hut is subjected are really designed to better his whole body thoroughly. All candidates show great fatigue even after the first three days. This is consciously sought; it is meant to make each ü̆wɨ̆ŋa amenable and so prepare him for the further aims of the ɛ̆ɨ̆xaŋ.

/864/ β. Instruction

The participants never lose sight of the fact that this event is supposed to be a period of serious training for their young people. Accordingly, some hours every day are devoted to teaching and instruction. Unfortunately, at present even this essential part of the entire ɛ̆ɨ̆xaŋ is not taken as seriously as it was formerly. The old people feel that the youth of today have for some time been alienated from the old tribal traditions and have adjusted to European standards of living. Hence the adults do not spend nearly as much time and effort on the actual instruction as they did formerly.

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During my first initiation, however, we were required to congregate regularly each evening with our venerable instructor, for at that time Alfredo, the leader, was particular about keeping strict order. During my second initiation old Whaim had all the ü̆wɨ̆ŋa sitting at his feet on one occasion only, and at that time he could give us only a very small part of the wealth of earlier exhortations. Many conscientious Yamana regret this decline most deeply, but within themselves, faithfully shielded by a reliable memory, they carry everything that was once offered them in the

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boys and girls are enlisted and forced to take part in all kinds of manual work.

1. Exercises for Boys. Among the Tamans the man's sphere of duty is definitely defined. Since each individual and his family /901/ are completely on their own, they must be capable of supporting themselves. Hence, our Fongians reason, everyone must have a certain degree of manual skill. They mean by this the considerable dexterity and assurance required to walk and obtain game animals. In particular it is a matter of surprising work, getting close to carnassans in their each caravan, and aiming for the best possible marksmanship in the use of their weapons.

This necessarily also includes an effort to increase fearlessness and courage in the young chaps, for both these qualities are sometimes strained to the utmost in a battle with large sea mammals. Our Tamans have learned through reliable experience that a critically high degree of dependence and timidity, cowardice, and fear persists in many chaps as long as they remain in the parental hut. The Fongs should and wants to do away with all this. In each person is usually inadvertent enough awareness of self so that he can stand on his own feet, confident of his personal power, as soon as he is dismissed from this training. The remarkably severe pressure on the chaps for self-control which is engendered by the strict daily procedure (p. 753) is sensitively and consciously tied in with this goal. The person who has himself completely and firmly under control is master of the arsenal of all his powers.

Making the boys more capable is a specific and necessary aim of the training period. They actually do receive useful instruction which is supervised by the chiefdrum, or the carpenter. There are no definite rules about which men are to be appointed to this task. It is customary for an uncle or an older cousin to devote himself to the chaps during the entire Fongs period in case the sponsor is unable to do so because of advanced age or physical infirmity. Ordinarily the sponsor himself performs this service. He is free to decide how often and at what times he arranges exercises for his protégé. He also decides whether one or another skill must be further developed. Sometimes these men get together and exchange views about individual candidates, or

/Mrs case./

It is fascinating for them to climb around on rock walls where they plunder the nests of cormorants. In my case, however, I take long practice and refined dexterity before each one has acquired adequate proficiency in this or that method of herding. The older men exercise a great deal of patience with the chagrin, and again the candidates must try five one way and then another. They are stimulated and encouraged, some of them are helped with much extra care. Time finally brings progress and sincere success. I was sufficiently convinced about these details during my first initiation. In view of all this, it no longer seems strange that many a Tsligos celebration lasted for months.

The attempts to rid a cowardly lad of timidity and fear are more serious. He is accompanied into the dense forest at night or taken to a lonely island where he is left by himself and obliged to hold out until he is called for. This procedure, with some changes, is repeated until the chagrin promptly goes anywhere he is sent at any time of night (XIII). It is not necessary among

> XIII. This demand is certainly strange, for it is only on rare occasions and for serious reasons that one of these Indians decides to leave his hut at night and go a great distance.

the Tsimane to frighten him in any /this/ way out-of-doors. About one thing, however, the men are implacable, and that is to rid a boy of the last remnant of cowardly fear, even if it takes a long time.

I. Exercises for Girls. There are no great differences from what I have just described for boys when the female chagrin in the initiation are introduced to the manual work and occupational duties that fall to them as in the family hut. They only need training here to supplement what they learned and practiced on the occasion of their menarche (p.367). However, at home they have much more often been called upon by their mother to co-operate fully in the work, in other words, they have been more thoroughly initiated into all manual skills than is the case with boys of the same age. They now take up whatever remains for them to learn.